



The Old Ironsides Report

23 June 2003

Soldiers rebuild Iraq's future by rebuilding Iraq's schools

Story by Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson, 1AD PAO

BAGHDAD, Iraq – First Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment, from Hanau, Germany with assistance from the 16th Engineer Battalion from Giessen, Germany and 389th Engineer Battalion, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Middleton, Iowa, is taking action on behalf of the youth of Iraq to ensure the future not only for the children, but for the entire country.

"We have 28 schools in the squadron sector and we are trying to work on all of those," said Capt. H. W. Hugh Darville, Squadron engineer and A Company, 16th Engineer Battalion commander.

The schools were in a poor state of repair, he said. They have been looted. Basic school supplies, such as pencils, pens, erasers, paper, blackboards and desks are not available at the schools or are too expensive for schools to purchase. The buildings need lots of work, including paint and electrical repairs.

The 1st Armored Division's Engineer Brigade commander used money from his discretionary funds to purchase some construction materials such as fluorescent lights, light switches, electrical outlets, plumbing supplies, paint, and paint brushes, Darville said.

"All those things we bought in addition to new chalkboards, desks for the students and desks for teachers; we will be bringing all those things out to the different schools," he said.

The U.S. Army engineers are on the ground conducting repairs, replacing wiring and plumbing in the school buildings, but they are not alone.

"Really, it is an overall team effort. What we try to do is get the teachers and students involved in things that they can do, like painting the walls," said Darville.

During school repairs, the engineers and students have been able to turn paint and rollers into instruments of liberation. The children's faces light up as they paint over line after line of pro-Saddam regime propaganda. Walls covered with pictures of AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers get a fresh coat of white paint.

"It is a delicate balance between giving them things as aid, and making them realize that they can take charge of their own lives and fix things for themselves," Darville said. "We need to get them involved in things that we are doing and not just give them handouts."

The overall response by the students and the communities has been overwhelming, said Darville.

"The immediate impact on the schools and communities," said Darville, "is that it gives them some hope; something tangible that they can see."

Other long-term projects being tackled by 1/1 Cavalry are irrigation channel clearing for local farms and extensive community trash cleanups to clear the streets of garbage.

"If we go out there and they see us helping out at the schools and cleaning up the neighborhoods, they can see something today," Darville said. "When we say that we are working on the water problem and it may take a few weeks to get it fixed, they can trust us because they can see us doing things right now."

The children are a focus throughout most of their operations, said Darville, because they are the ones who cannot help themselves. Soldiers have the opportunity to build a good rapport with future leaders of Iraq, he said.

"If you can get to every school in Iraq and give a student positive interaction with U.S. personnel 20 or 30 years from now some of these children will become the leaders of Iraq and that will significantly help international relations and the bonds between our two countries," Darville said.

New 501st MI n. commander



Lt. Col. Laurence M. Mixon receives the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion colors from Brig. Gen. Rhett Hernandez, 1 AD deputy commanding general for support, during a June 22nd ceremony. Photo by Sgt. Mark Rickert, 1 AD PAO.

NEWS

Powell: Israeli Attack Could Slow Peace

SOUTHERN SHUNEH, Jordan (AP) - Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday the killing of a Hamas leader by Israel could set back the U.S.-backed peace initiative for the region. Powell said he was concerned about Saturday's shooting by the Israeli army of Abdullah Kawasme in the West Bank town of Hebron, but the U.S. official stopped short of condemning the act because he lacked details.

Fire Crews Work to Save Ariz. Observatory

SUMMERHAVEN, Ariz. (AP) - Firefighters brought in hoses Sunday to defend an observatory against an uncontrolled wildfire that had already burned more than 250 homes in a mountaintop community. Crews also planned backburns to clear vegetation along a ridge where they were making a stand to try to keep the wildfire from reaching clusters of homes on the outskirts of Summerhaven.

Florida Residents Urged to Flee Flooding

BRADENTON, Fla. (AP) - Emergency officials urged the evacuation Sunday of more than 600 homes downstream from Lake Manatee after a flood gate on a dam holding back the lake jammed closed. Some nearby homes were already flooding Sunday morning. In the lake, the water level was 5 feet higher than normal, and rain in the region was sending water streaming into the lake faster than two open flood gates could release it into the river below.

Marines Arrive in N.C. After Iraq Mission

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. (AP) - About 50 Marines rode ashore at Onslow Beach at dawn Sunday, the first of thousands expected back at Camp Lejeune this week after five months in Iraq. Members of A Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, rolled up on the beach aboard 16 amphibious assault vehicles launched from the amphibious transport USS Ponce, just off shore.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

Fear not that life shall come to an end, but rather fear that is shall never have a beginning.

--J.H. Newman

Our fears lock us up if we let them. They can prevent us from tasting adventure, from experiencing new wonders. We are often terrified of unknowns and fret about what might happen.

It is natural to be cautious about the unknown, especially when we consider the environment in which we work. But in order to keep our caution from becoming fear we must take action, with the faith that God is with us.

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you... Isaiah 41:10

SPORTS

Valiant effort goes for naught in TKO

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Vitali Klitschko was bloodied but still willing. He had given Lennox Lewis all he wanted and more, yet after six rounds he sat bleeding on his stool as a ring doctor ended his chance of becoming heavyweight champion Saturday.

Klitschko hurt Lewis during six brawling and sometimes brutal rounds, exposing him as an aging fighter. He answered questions about his heart and talent, while raising many about the future of the heavyweight champion.

About the only thing he didn't do night was win the heavyweight title. That still belonged to Lewis after the fight was stopped because of a bad cut over the challenger's left eye.

"He is a great fighter. I won this fight in points," Klitschko said. "I want a rematch. I showed everybody that I can fight Lennox Lewis."

An entertaining fight ended on a sour note when the ring doctor ordered it stopped after the sixth round. Klitschko was winning the bout on all three scorecards.

"If the fight went on, I would have knocked him out," Lewis said. "There is no way he could have finished the fight. He was just deteriorated anyway."

Klitschko hurt Lewis in the early rounds and was more than holding his own in a fight that magnified both the ring rust Lewis had from not fighting for a year and the unmistakable fact he was a 37-year-old heavyweight in the ring.

All three ringside judges had Klitschko winning 58-56, but ring doctor Paul Wallace looked at the cut and ordered referee Lou Moret to stop the fight.

But the 6-foot-7 Ukrainian came out and traded punches from the opening bell, rocking Lewis in the second and third rounds and hitting him with almost every left jab he threw. Lewis looked tired and old, but did enough to come back and land uppercuts and right hands.

And in other news...

Man Arrested at Prince William's Party

LONDON (AP) - In an breach of royal security, a man burst onto the stage at Prince William's 21st birthday party and snatched a microphone from the young royal as he addressed 300 guests, including his father and Queen Elizabeth II, news reports said Sunday. The intruder was identified by his father as Aaron Barschak, 36, a comic who has staged at least one other similar prank and who calls himself a "comedy terrorist."

TODAY'S WEATHER

High: 109F/43C

Low: 81F/27C

